

support to see that that transition occurs. Now, it may not occur exactly as we like.

One of the provisions says you must have free elections within 2 years. I wish it was 6 months. I wish it were the next day. What happens if it is 2½ years and not 2 years, or 2 years, 2 months? It is that kind of detail that is in this bill, Mr. President. That is not smart. That is not wise. That is not prudent. I do not know of any other place where we provided this kind of language.

Imagine the Philippines if we tried that. Imagine if we tried it, as I said, in all of these New Independent Republics that have emerged. Our ability to weigh in and create that kind of transition would have been severely hampered had we been required to meet the standards we are going to be adopting in this legislation if my amendment is not approved.

Now, I do not know, again, how this will come out politically. But I hope my colleagues would look and just read the sections 205, 206, and 207. They go on for some pages. Some require "shall," others "should," in the transition.

Last, and it gets into this same area, the settlement of outstanding U.S. claims. And here the language, Mr. President, is pretty emphatic in the bill.

No assistance may be provided under the authority of this act to a transition government in Cuba.

And then it goes on for a page or two here talking about how we resolve these outstanding claims.

Mr. President, I hope that happens. I do not think any U.S. citizen who has property confiscated anywhere in the world ought not to be compensated. But we have now 38 countries in the world, including Cuba, where United States citizens' property has been expropriated, and we are in the process of trying to get those individuals compensated for that property.

Some of the countries where that occurs are very strong allies of ours. Germany is one, I point out. We now have diplomatic relations with Vietnam. The list is lengthy, 38 countries.

We never said before we could provide any assistance to those countries until those claims and matters are all settled, and yet that is what we do with this legislation. We are saying we cannot provide under this—the language very specifically in section 207, "Settlement of Outstanding U.S. Claims to Confiscated Property in Cuba," section (A), paragraph 1:

No assistance may be provided—

The assumption is that you are going to set up a mechanism to resolve these claims, again no matter how meritorious they may be, and have that control our foreign policy interests, which would be, I presume, to support the transition to get aid to people to try to establish a presence there and assist that process. To have it totally linked to claims issues, where we do not do

that even among our allies around the globe, seems to me to be going too far. It just goes too far.

Again, I realize with everything else going on around here that the attention on something like this may not seem like much to people. I just think it is bad policy, Mr. President, to have this kind of detailed step-by-step requirement that you have to meet and then absolutely hamstringing not just this administration, but future administrations, from being able to move intelligently and rapidly to try to shore up a government that will follow Fidel Castro.

Again, I emphasize to my colleagues, none of these provisions has anything to do with the present government in Cuba—not one thing to do with it. It is all about the government that comes afterward. It seems to me we ought to be trying to figure out a way how we can play the most creative role in that transition, to try to move that process toward a democratically elected government as quickly as we can—as quickly as we can. And yet, before we can do that, we now have to go through a series of hoops that will make it very, very difficult for us to respond creatively and imaginatively to a situation that has gone on far too long.

So, Mr. President, I will not dwell on this any longer. I made the point, I hope, and I urge my colleagues to look at these sections of the bill. Some, as I said, are more advisory. Others absolutely demand certain things occur. They can go through and read which is which. It seems to me we ought to stick with the paragraph I read earlier on in my statement, and that is that we provide the kind of flexibility in allowing the Cuban people to determine for themselves what it is that they would like to have as that new government.

We may not decide to support it. It may not meet our standards and we will act accordingly, but the best policy is the one that is included as a preamble to this section, and the preamble to this section is one that every single person in this country, let alone in this body, can support, and that is the policy of the United States to support the self-determination of the Cuban people and be impartial to any selection of the Cuban people as to their government. It is their choice. If they want to make a bad choice, that is their right. We do not have to support it, but that is their right if they so desire.

The idea, then, that we are going to detail in painful minutiae every step that must be met, I think is a mistake. Again, I am not quarreling myself with any provisions here necessarily. There are things I support and I believe make sense. But to spell out as a roadmap what they have to follow in great detail before we can provide any kind of help down there is a mistake, and I urge the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. President, I withhold the remainder of my time.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. HELMS], is recognized for 20 minutes.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the distinguished President of Estonia waits without in the Vice President's Office. I desire to present him to the Senate, and I shall do so, and I shall go and invite him to come in. In the meantime, I suggest the absence of a quorum, the time to be charged to neither side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY THE PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA, LENNART MERI

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I am honored to present to the Senate the President of Estonia, the distinguished Lennart Meri.

RECESS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for 5 minutes, so that Senators and staff can greet our distinguished guest.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 11:06 a.m., recessed until 11:13 a.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CAMPBELL).

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HELMS. As I understand it, I have 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. HELMS. On the two amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I will not use all that time. I will reserve some. When the Senator from Connecticut is willing, we will yield back what remains of our time.

Mr. President, Senator DODD's amendment proposes to delete from the pending bill any guidance and recommendations to the President from the Congress of the United States as to what constitutes a transition or democratic government in Cuba. I am a little surprised at the thrust of the amendment. But I respect the Senator, although I disagree with him.

The administration has maintained that the President should retain flexibility to deal with the situation in